

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE #25

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

May 16, 2008 – P.T. 2008.08

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Section 1.1 Purpose

Every year, 120,000 children 14 years of age and younger suffer some form of permanent damage due to unintentional/accidental injuries. Infants and toddlers are at high risk of unintentional injury or death due to their inability to recognize and react to protect themselves from the danger. According to data from the National SAFE KIDS Campaign:

- Accidental, or unintentional, injury is the leading cause of death among children, teens and young adults.
- The five leading causes of accidental injury are burns, motor vehicle accidents, falls, poisonings and drowning.
- Burns and fires are the fourth most common cause of accidental death in children.
- Nearly 75 percent of all burns in children are preventable.
- Nearly 2,900 adults and children die every year in fires or from other burn injuries.
- The majority of children ages 4 and under, who are hospitalized for burn-related injuries, suffer from scald burns (65 percent) or contact burns (20 percent).
- Hot tap water burns cause more deaths and hospitalizations than burns from any other hot liquids.

Fire/burns, motor vehicle traffic accidents, suffocation and accidental falls are the leading causes of unintentional deaths of children under the age of five in Illinois. Numerous Illinois children also die each year as a result of domestic violence.

While it may be impossible to eliminate all the dangers children encounter in their homes, one of the most important factors in reducing those dangers is parent education. The Home Safety Checklist, when properly used with parents and caregivers, provides an effective home safety assessment and educational tool that will assist in promoting the safety of children.

Section 1.2 Primary Users

Primary users of the Home Safety Checklists are Investigation, Intact and Permanency Specialists.

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Section 1.3 When to Complete the Checklist

A) Intact Cases

Intact Specialists shall complete the Home Safety Checklist:

- Within 30 days of the case opening regardless of whether a CFS 2027 was completed by an Investigation Specialist;
- Prior to a major change of life circumstance (e.g., move to a new home, child birth);
- Every six months during the life of the case;
- When a family with an open service case is the subject of a subsequent child abuse or neglect investigation.

1) Subsequent CA/N Investigations of Families with Open Cases

The Investigation Specialist or the Investigation Specialist Supervisor shall notify the family assigned intact or permanency worker or the worker's supervisor of the subsequent oral report (SOR) of alleged abuse or neglect within 48 hours after assignment of the investigation. The notification shall include the reminder that the worker must complete a new checklist or re-certify the family's previous checklist within *14 days* of the SOR. The intact or permanency worker must also complete a SACWIS case note that documents the worker's current assessment of home safety issues and forward the documentation to the Investigation Specialist. The Investigation Specialist cannot complete the investigation without receipt of documentation that a checklist has been completed.

2) Home Safety Checklist Waiver

A Home Safety Checklist Waiver may be granted by the intact or permanency supervisor if the allegation or allegations of the SOR do not involve inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food or inadequate clothing. The supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisor case note documenting the waiver and rationale for the approval.

3) Home Safety Checklist Recertification

A Home Safety Checklist Recertification may be granted by the intact or permanency supervisor if the checklist was completed within six months of the SOR; and the SOR does not involve an allegation of inadequate supervision, inadequate food, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter environmental neglect or substance misuse; and the intact or permanency worker has completed a walk through of the family's home to confirm that the condition of the home has not changed. The supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisory case note documenting the approval and rationale for the approval.

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B) Placement Cases

Permanency Specialists shall complete the Home Safety Checklist:

- When a child is placed with an unlicensed relative. The assessment must be completed on the home of the relative.
- When there is a child abuse or neglect investigation of an unlicensed home in which a child is placed.
- Prior to a scheduled unsupervised visit in the home of the parents.
- When there is a child abuse or neglect investigation involving an alleged incident that occurs during an unsupervised home visit.
- Prior to placement of a pregnant or parenting teen in an independent living arrangement.
- When a parenting teen is identified as the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect involving his or her child or any child residing in the household.
- Prior to implementation of child care arrangements involving a child for whom the Department is legally responsible when a parent or caregiver plans to use an unlicensed day care home. The assessment must be completed on the day care home.
- Prior to a major change of life circumstance (e.g., move to a new home, child birth).

1) Home Safety Checklist Waiver

A Home Safety Checklist Waiver may be granted by the Permanency Supervisor if there is an SOR; and a checklist was completed for the family within 30 days, and the allegation or allegations of the SOR do not involve inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food, or inadequate clothing. The Intact or Permanency Supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisory case note documenting the waiver and rationale for the approval.

2) Home Safety Checklist Re-Certification

A Home Safety Checklist Re-Certification may be granted by the Permanency Supervisor if the checklist was completed within six months of the SOR; and the SOR does not involve an allegation or allegations of inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food, inadequate clothing; and the Permanency Specialist has completed a walk through of the family's home to confirm that the conditions of the home have not changed. The Permanency Supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisory case note documenting the approval for re-certification and the rationale for approval.

Note: When there is an allegation of inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food or inadequate clothing the checklist should be completed at the time the Safety Determination Form, CFS 1441, is completed.

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C) Investigations

1) Investigation Specialists shall complete the Home Safety Checklist:

- At the time of an initial investigation when there is an allegation of inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, inadequate food or environmental neglect.
- Prior to the completion of any formal child abuse or neglect investigation unless there is an open service case.
- When the parent places his or her child with a relative or non-related family as part of a safety plan. The Home Safety Checklist is completed in the child's placement environment.
- Prior to the Department's placement of a child or youth with an unlicensed relative. The Home Safety Checklist is completed in the child's placement environment.
- In cases where an investigation is unfounded at the initial stage but is referred for intact or child services the Home Safety Checklist must be completed prior to the referral.

2) Investigation Specialists are *not required* to complete the Home Safety Checklist:

- When the investigation involves child abuse and neglect in schools.
- When the investigation involves child abuse and neglect in childcare facilities.
- When the report involves multiple perpetrators and children (e.g., mass molestation investigations).
- When the alleged perpetrator does not reside in the home of the involved children. However, a Home Safety Checklist must be completed on the alleged perpetrator's home if minor children reside in the home.
- In situations when protective custody is taken as the result of a court order, reasons of child safety or any situation where a worker feels threatened.
- When the investigation involves a family with an open service case with the Department. In these situations, the Investigation Specialist or the Investigation Specialist Supervisor shall notify the family's assigned intact or permanency worker or the workers supervisor of the subsequent oral report (SOR) within 48 hours after assignment of the investigation. The notification shall include the reminder that the intact or permanency worker must complete a new checklist or re-certify the family's previous checklist within *14 days* of the SOR date and provide the documentation to the Investigation Specialist.

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3) Home Safety Checklist Waiver

A Home Safety Checklist Waiver may be granted by the Investigation Specialist Supervisor if there is an SOR and the family does not have an open service case with the Department; and a checklist was completed for the family within 30 days, and the allegation or allegations of the SOR do not involve inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food, or inadequate clothing. The Investigation Specialist Supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisory case note documenting the waiver and rationale for the approval.

4) Home Safety Checklist Re-Certification

A Home Safety Checklist Re-Certification may be granted by the Investigation Specialist Supervisor if the checklist was completed within six months of the SOR; and the SOR does not involve an allegation or allegations of inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food, inadequate clothing; and the Investigation Specialist has completed a walk through of the family's home to confirm that the conditions of the home has not changed. The Investigation Specialist Supervisor must complete a SACWIS supervisory case note documenting the approval for re-certification and the rationale for approval.

Note: When there is an allegation of inadequate shelter, inadequate supervision, substance misuse, environmental neglect, inadequate food or inadequate clothing the checklist should be completed the time the Safety Determination Form, CFS 1441, is completed.

Section 1.4 How to Complete the Checklist

A) Intact and Placement Specialists

The Home Safety Checklist addresses fifteen categories of home safety. Each category is supported by safety standards, literature, and straightforward factual information that should be shared with the parent/caregiver. Use the factual information and literature associated with each category to establish an instructive dialogue to educate the family on safety issues.

There are three activities required for each standard:

1. Discuss the safety standard with the parent/caregiver;
2. Indicate the presence or absence of the safety standard;
3. Provide the parent/caregiver with five pieces of literature (*PARENTS' GUIDE to Fire Safety for Babies and Toddlers, Back to Sleep, Never Shake a Baby!, Violence Prevention and Get water wise...SUPERVISE, and A Helpful Guide for Parents and Caregivers*) that you are required to provide the family. This literature can be ordered from Central Stores through normal channels.

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For example, once you have discussed the importance of having a working smoke detector and observed that the family has a smoke detector located near their sleeping areas and the smoke detector works, circle “Yes” after the standard: *The home has a working smoke detector located near the family’s sleeping areas.* If the family does not have a working smoke detector or has a smoke detector that does not work, circle “No”. A “No” response requires a brief explanation in the Comments section.

When the parent/caregiver is provided fire safety literature, circle “Yes” to indicate that the required fire prevention literature was provided. The Sleeping standard also requires a comment when a worker does not observe a crib or bassinette for infants age 1 or younger. Some standards are age specific. For example, the standards that discuss burns may not be applicable to older children. When the standard does not apply circle “N/A”.

When a standard requires the observation of a specific item or items (e.g., smoke detectors, small electrical appliances), you are required to complete the task if the item is readily observable. Do not open cabinets or drawers, move furniture or handle dangerous items. On the last page of the checklist there is a section to make additional comments or identify other hazards.

The home safety assessment is a service provided to the children and families served by the Department. In order for the Home Safety Checklist to be effective, the responsibility for its completion must be shared with the parent/caregiver. Use the information provided at the top of page one of the instructions to explain the purpose of the assessment, provide the parent/caregiver a copy of the CFS 2026 or 2026-S (Spanish adaptation), Home Safety Checklist for Parents and Caregivers, to use during the assessment, to take notes on and retain for future reference. The formats of the CFS 2027 and CFS2026/ 2026-S differ; use the prompts provided on the CFS 2027 to locate the corresponding CFS 2026/2026-S sections. Sign, date and have the parent/caregiver sign the completed assessment. If the parent/caregiver declines the opportunity to complete the checklist, check the declined box and request that the parent/caregiver verify his or her decision by signing the form. If the parent/caregiver refuses to sign the form, document the negative response on the parent’s signature line. Place the completed assessment in the investigative local index file.

Note: The CFS 2027 does not supersede any of the requirements for the completion of the CFS 1441 or CFS 454, HMR Placement Safety Checklist.

Suggest that the family visit the following resources if they have Internet access:
American College of Emergency Physicians, www.acep.org
American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org>
American Red Cross Health and Safety Services, <http://www.redcross.org>
National Safe Kids Campaign, <http://www.safekids.org>

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B) Investigation Specialists

The Home Safety Checklist addresses seven categories of home safety. Each category is supported by safety standards, literature, and straightforward factual information that should be shared with the parent/caregiver. Use the factual information and literature associated with each category to establish an instructive dialogue to educate the family on safety issues.

There are three activities required for each standard:

1. Discuss the safety standard with the parent/caregiver;
2. Indicate the presence or absence of the safety standard;
3. Provide the parent/caregiver with five pieces of literature (*PARENTS' GUIDE to Fire Safety for Babies and Toddlers, Back to Sleep, Never Shake a Baby!, Violence Prevention and Get water wise...SUPERVISE*) that you are required to provide the family. This literature can be ordered from Central Stores through normal channels.

For example, once you have discussed the importance of having a working smoke detector and observed that the family has a smoke detector located near their sleeping areas and the smoke detector works, circle "Yes" after the standard: *The home has a working smoke detector located near the family's sleeping areas*. If the family does not have a working smoke detector or has a smoke detector that does not work, circle "No". A "No" response requires a brief explanation in the Comments section.

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When a standard requires the observation of a specific item or items (e.g., smoke detectors, small electrical appliances), you are required to complete the task if the item is readily observable. Do not open cabinets or drawers, move furniture or handle dangerous items. On the last page of the checklist there is a section to make additional comments or identify other hazards.

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National Safe Kids Campaign, <http://www.safekids.org>